

CLINICAL CENTER
COMMISSIONED OFFICERS' (CO) PROCESSING GUIDE

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Corps Information

Purpose of the Commissioned Corps

A major segment of the Department of Health and Human Services is the Public Health Service. The Commissioned Corps is a component of the Public Health Service and one of seven uniformed services. The goal of the Commissioned Corps is to recruit, train and develop health professionals; to assign them to various government agencies and their programs that engage in preventive health maintenance; and offer health expertise in a time of war, or national, or international emergency.

Appointment to the Corps

Individuals who are seriously being considered for employment in the Clinical Center in the following occupational categories listed should be informed of the existence and purpose of the Commissioned Corps. Introductory materials regarding the Commission Corps can be found at:

http://dcp.psc.gov/phs_cc/default.htm

If additional information is requested, individuals should be referred to CC/OHRM.

Commissioned Corps Occupational Categories

1. Dental
2. Dietitian
3. Engineering
4. Health Services
5. Medical
6. Nursing
7. Pharmacy
8. Sanitarian
9. Scientist
10. Therapist
11. Veterinarian
12. Research Officer Group

Qualifications

Applicants to the Commissioned Corps must meet the following minimum qualifications to be eligible for appointment:

- Must be under 44 years of age (Individuals who are over the age of 44, and have previous uniformed service or have had time as a civil servant in the PHS, spent functioning in a capacity similar to a Commissioned Officer (CO), will be considered by the Division of Commissioned Corps);
- Must be a U. S. Citizen (Native or Naturalized);
- Must be applying for a Commissionable Occupational Category;
- Must hold a degree from an Accredited College/University and/or completed an Accredited Training Program;
- Must have no apparent Suitability or Security Issues;
- Must have of no more than eight years of prior Military Service; and
- Must have no apparent Medical Issues.

Vacancy Announcement and Tracking System (VAATS)

The Vacancy Announcement and Tracking System (VAATS) is a database that is composed of vacancies submitted by PHS agencies on a voluntary basis. It includes vacancies that DCP has approved as suitable for COs. VAATS is used by COs looking for new career opportunities and Agencies that want to fill a vacancy with a Public Health Service Officer. Officers can view the vacancies in VAATS via the DCP Electronic Bulletin Board (EBB). To place a vacancy in VAATS, a VAATS worksheet should be submitted to:

VAATS Project Officer
DCP, Room 4-35, Parklawn Building
56000 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857-0001

Phone: (301) 594-3360

Agencies may also request a list of qualified officers for a vacancy that has been submitted. The listing is based on a computer-generated search of personnel data files of active duty officers.

Call To Active Duty

If an individual meets the above minimum requirements and decides to apply to the Commissioned Corps, the individual must submit the following to the Division Commissioned Personnel. This paperwork includes:

1. PHS-50, Application for Appointment As a CO In The Public Health Service.
2. Curriculum Vitae & Bibliography.
3. Official Notarized Copies of College Transcripts.
4. Official Notarized Copies of Graduate School Transcripts.
5. Four professional references (references should not be given by family members or personal friends).
6. PHS-6273, New GI Bill Election Form and Statement of Understanding.
7. Standard Form 85, Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions.
8. Standard Form 87 Fingerprint Form, Applicant must have all fingerprints taken and submitted on card. Usually it is a good idea to have two full sets of fingerprints taken and submitted; in case some prints are not clear.
9. Verification of training (i.e. if applicant is applying for clinical associate, must have verification of residency training).
10. Copy of appropriate professional license.
11. PHS -5141, Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Appointment Affidavit.
12. Pay Estimate (computed by Personnel Operations Section).

In addition to the above paperwork, the applicant must receive thorough medical and dental examinations and have the following forms completed:

13. Standard Form 88, Report of Medical Examination.
14. PHS-6355, Report of Dental Examination of Applicants To The Commissioned Corps of The Public Health Service.

Medical and dental examinations can be conducted by the applicant's personal physician and dentists, or may be conducted at a nearby uniformed services medical treatment facility. It is the prospective officer's responsibility to make sure that he/she receives a complete physical prior to his/her Call to Active Duty.

A form PHS-1662, "Request for Personnel Action-Commissioned Officer" must be submitted by the Clinical Center Department in order for any personnel action to be processed. A .pdf fillable copy of the PHS-1662 is available in the Commissioned Corps section of the OHRM website at <http://ohrm.cc.nih.gov>. Once you have accessed the website, click on Commissioned Corps, then click on forms. The fillable copy of the PHS-1662 is listed under forms. Please refer to the sample completed PHS-1662s in the Appendix.

Once all of the above paperwork has been reviewed and forwarded to the Division of Commissioned Personnel (DCP), and it has been determined that the applicant is suitable for duty in the Commissioned Corps, orders for Call To Active Duty will be generated based on the information on the form PHS 1662 submitted. This is the applicant's official notice to report for duty in the Commissioned Corps. The officer should not report for duty until orders for Call To Active Duty are received.

Transfers

When an officer transfers from one organization to another organization, all parties involved must agree upon a release date. Transfers are affected when the gaining organization submits the following materials to OHRM, for review and processing:

1. Form 1662 - Request For Personnel Action
(The release date and the individual to contact in case of questions concerning the release date must be given on the 1662.) and
2. Curriculum Vitae & Bibliography.

Lead Times For Submitting Paperwork To OHRM For Calls To Active Duty & Transfers

Call To Active Duty	6 Months
Transfers	2 Months

Lead Times are required to allow time for paperwork to be signed by approving authorities, reviewed and forwarded to SASE and DCP for processing.

Personnel Orders

Just as SF-52s generate SF-50s, Notification of Personnel Actions in the Civil Service, PHS-1662s generate Personnel Orders. DCP forwards one copy of the Personnel Orders to the CO's station address and another copy to OHRM.

Waivers and Late Actions

The following actions must be accompanied by a memo addressed to the Director, DCP when any of the following scenarios occurs:

1. A transfer involving travel is submitted to DCP less than 20 days before the requested effective date.
2. A transfer without travel submitted to DCP less than 10 days before the requested effective date.
3. A COSTEP appointment submitted to DCP less than 10 days before the requested effective date.

The memo to the Director, DCP should state why the paperwork was submitted late and describe the incoming officer's responsibilities in the assignment and it's impact on the organization's mission.

Travel Allowances

Officers are often entitled to certain allowances to cover expenses, such as shipment of household goods, related to travel associated with initial and subsequent assignments. For information regarding travel allowances, contact the Transportation Management Division, Bldg. 31, Rm. 2B55 at (301) 496-1595.

Pay & Allowances

Civil Service employees are paid every two weeks. COs are paid on a **monthly** basis.

The pay of COs has various components:

1. Base Pay
2. Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS)
3. Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)
4. Special Pays Based on Training and Board Certification

Basic Pay and Allowances

Base Pay is determined by the officer's Base Pay Entry Date (BPED) and temporary grade. Base Pay is considered to be the Officer's actual salary. A Base Pay Entry Date is given on an officer's personnel order for call to active duty. The Base Pay Entry Date is computed by subtracting total creditable uniformed service time from the date of appointment, CAD, into the Commissioned Corps, PHS. The BPED is utilized as the base date when establishing the rate of Base Pay for an officer at the determined grade. Base Pay is subject to Federal income tax and state income tax.

Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) is a non-taxable allowance officers receive for housing quarters. The amount of the allowance is contingent upon the officer's grade, whether the officer occupies government housing, and if the officer has dependents. Officers with no dependents should complete form PHS-2977 to receive their BAH. Officers with dependents should complete form PHS 1637-1 to receive their BAH. Current BAH rates can be viewed by accessing <http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/bahform.html>.

Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) is a non-taxable allowance paid to all active duty officers. This allowance is intended for personal or household expenses other than for housing quarters. All officers receive the same BAS regardless of grade or years of service.

Military Pay Tables may be accessed via <http://www.armedforcesnews.com>.

Special Pays and Bonuses

In addition to the Base Pay, BAH and BAS, some COs may receive special pays based on their occupational categories. All special pays **are** considered **taxable** income.

Special Pays for Medical Officers

Variable Special Pay (VSP) is authorized for all medical officers serving on active duty for at least one year. The amount of variable special pay is based on the officer's grade (rank) and creditable service entry date (CSED) and accumulated credit service years.

Board Certified Pay (BCP) is authorized for medical officers who are board certified in a specialty discipline and serving on active duty for at least one year. Medical officers can only be paid for one board certification even if they are certified in more than one specialty discipline. The amount of BCP is based on the officer's grade and creditable service years. The officer cannot receive payment of BCP until proof in the form of a copy of the congratulatory letter from the certifying board or a copy of the board certification has been submitted to OHRM to be forwarded to DCP for inclusion in the officer's official personnel folder.

Retention Special Pay (RSP) is an annual lump sum bonus given to medical officers who agree to serve on active duty for a specific amount of time. The period of service required by the RSP is served consecutively with the officer's intended tour of duty. The amount of RSP bonus is \$15,000 for all medical officers.

Multiyear Retention Bonus (MRB) is payable to medical officers who agree to serve on active duty for a period of 2, 3, or 4 years. The amount of MRB is contingent upon the medical officer's specialty and the length of the MRB contract. In order to be eligible for MRB, the medical officer must:

1. Not be involved in long-term training;
2. Not be serving training related obligatory service;
3. Be eligible to continue on active duty for the duration of the contract;
4. Have a current valid medical license;

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5. Be board certified in a specialty discipline;
6. Be a grade 0-6 or below;
7. Not be fulfilling an MORB or ISP-Research Officer Group contract;
8. Be eligible for RSP
9. Sign a contract to remain on active duty for 2 - 4 years.

Multiyear Retention Bonus (MRB) and Retention Special Pay (RSP) contracts must have concurrent dates.

Incentive Special Pay (ISP) is a special annual lump sum bonus approved for medical officers based on medical specialties. Medical officers who sign an RSP contract for at least one year to continue at a hard-to-fill or isolated location are also approved for ISP.

In order to initiate the RSP, MRB and ISP special pays, the medical officer must complete form PHS-6300-1, Medical Special Pay (MSP) Contract Request. The contract must be completed as indicated by the instructions and notarized. The notarized contract with the Validation Record and any additional required paperwork should be submitted to CC/OHRM to be forwarded to DCP for processing. It is essential that the medical officer submit this paperwork in a timely manner. Failure to submit the contract and necessary paperwork prior to initial call of duty or prior to anniversary date of the original contract could result in **financial loss** for the officer.

Lead Time For Submitting Medical Special Pay (MSP) Contract Request To OHRM 2 Months

Special Pays for Dental Officers

Variable Special Pay (VSP) is authorized for all dental officers serving on active duty for at least one year. The amount of variable special pay is based on the officer's grade and creditable service entry date (CSED) and accumulated credit service years.

Board Certified Pay (BCP) is authorized for dental officers who are board certified in a specialty discipline and serving on active duty for at least one year. Dental officers can only be paid for one board certification even if they are certified in more than one specialty discipline. The amount of BCP is based on the officer's grade and creditable service years. The officer cannot receive payment of BCP until proof in the form of a copy of the congratulatory letter from the certifying board or a copy of the board certification has been submitted to CC/OHRM and forwarded to DCP for inclusion in the officer's official personnel folder.

Additional Special Pay is payable to dental officers with at least three years of creditable service who choose to sign a contract for another year of active duty. The amount of additional special pay is contingent upon the officer's creditable service years and grade.

Special Pays for Nurses

Nurse Anesthetist Pay is an annual lump sum bonus given to nurse anesthetists who sign on for active duty for at least one year. The lump sum amount is \$15,000.

Nurse Accession Bonus is a one-time lump sum bonus of \$5,000 payable to nursing officers who are called to active duty after November 29, 1989 and who sign an extended active duty contract for at least four years.

Special Pays for Optometry Officers/ Veterinary Officers

Optometry Officers and Veterinary Officers who have signed a contract for at least one year are entitled to a monthly special pay of \$100 for each month of active duty.

Engineering and Scientific Career Continuation Pay (ESCCP)

ESCCP is designated for scientific and engineering positions that are considered to have a critical shortage. Critical shortage science positions are defined as those where the civil service equivalent positions would be entitled to special pay. Critical shortage engineering positions are defined as those located in Isolated Hardship sites. In order to be eligible for the ESCCP, the science or engineering officer must:

1. Possess a degree in engineering or science from an accredited university or college;
2. Meet the standards to be appointed to or be a member of the scientist or engineering category;
3. Not be serving training-related or scholarship-related obligatory service;
4. Not be involved in long-term training;
5. Be working in a science or engineering specialty that has been identified as a critical shortage specialty;
6. Not be getting any type of bonus authorized by 37 U.S.C. 302;

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7. Sign an agreement to remain in the critical shortage position for a minimum of one year;
8. Have been on active duty with a Uniformed Service for three but less than eleven years when meeting eligibility requirements, or have finished three but less than eleven years with a Uniformed Service with a minimum of three years as a scientific or engineering officer;
9. Be a grade 0-6 or below;
10. Not have been on active duty in another Uniformed Service over the last twelve months, or served on active duty as an inter service transfer.

Benefits

Health Benefits

Commissioned Officers can receive medical and dental care without charge at any Uniformed Services Medical Treatment Facility (USTMF) i.e., Bethesda Naval. Officers will need to present their Uniformed Service ID to receive treatment. Additional insurance can be purchased through the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES).

Dependents of COs can receive medical care at any USTMF for no fee or a minimal fee depending on the nature of the treatment, and whether it is received on an inpatient or outpatient basis. Medical care for CO's dependents can also be acquired through Tricare, a triple option health plan consisting of a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO), and a Fee for Standard Service. Further information can be obtained via the website <http://tricare.osd.mil>.

Dental care for family members can be attained through enrollment in the Department of Defense's Tricare Family Member Dental Plan, currently administered by United Concordia, for a premium. Additional information can be obtained via <http://tricare.osd.mil>.

Life Insurance

Per the Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000, effective April 1, 2001, all active-duty officers will automatically be insured for the maximum Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) Coverage of \$250,000, even if coverage was previously declined coverage or elected reduced coverage. The current monthly premium SGLI is \$.80 per \$10,000 of coverage. The cost for full coverage of \$250,000 is a monthly premium of \$20.00.

Officers desiring less than automatic maximum coverage or no coverage should complete form SGLV-8286 (April 2001 version) showing the amount of coverage desired (including no coverage). Coverage amounts can be reduced in multiples of \$10,000. The new SGLV-8286 (April 2001 version) may be retrieved at <http://www.insurance.vagov/forms/8286.pdf>.

The completed form SGLV-8286 should be forwarded to:

Division of Commissioned Personnel (DCP)
ATTN: Compensation Branch
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 4-50
Rockville, MD 20857-0001

All new SGLI elections become effective the first day of the month after an election is received by DCP, Compensation Branch. For additional information regarding SGLI you may access <http://www.insurance.va.gov/sqivqli/sqivqli.htm>.

SGLI automatically continues for 120 days when an officer separates or retires. Within the initial 120 days after separation or retirement, the Veteran's Administration will send the officer information regarding Veteran's Group Life Insurance (VGLI) and a Form SGLV 8714-1, "Application for Veteran's Group Life Insurance (Veteran's Separated Less Than 120 Days)". Completion and submission of this form will effect the officer's SGLI to be converted to VGLI. The completed form and the first premium payment should be sent to:

Office of Servicemen's Group Life Insurance
212 Washington Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102

The officer should be sure to fill out the beneficiary designation portion of Form SGLV 8714-1, "Application for Veteran's Group Life Insurance (Veteran's Separated Less Than 120 Days)," even if doing so merely re-designates the beneficiaries listed on the SGLI. This is important because the beneficiary elections listed on the officer's SGLI only remain in effect for a maximum of 60 days following the effective date of the VGLI coverage.

If the officer does not submit a SGLV 8714-1 within the first 120 days after retirement or separation, the officer may still apply for VGLI up to one year after separation or retirement. After the first 120 days of separation or retirement, the officer applies for VGLI by completing VA Form 20-8714-2, "Application for Veterans Group Life

Insurance (Veterans Separated More than 120 Days) and submitting it along with the initial premium and evidence of eligibility for insurance to the OSGLI address listed above.

SGLI coverage continues for the disabled veteran for one year after separation or until the injured officer no longer is disabled, whichever comes first, but never before the initial 120 days after separation. The veteran may apply for VGLI at anytime during the one year period that SGLI is still in effect.

VGLI consists of a five-year nonrenewable term policy purchased by the Veteran's Administration from a commercial company and administered by the Office of Servicemen's Group Life Insurance (OSGLI). Near the end of an officer's five-year VGLI period, OSGLI will send the officer information regarding options to convert the VGLI to an individual policy with one of the participating companies. If an applicant chooses to convert to an individual policy with a participating company, the application and first premium must be submitted to the company prior to the termination.

Veteran's Benefits Upon Separation

PHS COs are eligible for Veterans Benefits such as home loans, educational benefits, health benefits and burial and memorial benefits, if they meet the following requirements:

1. Entered on active duty on or after October 17, 1981 and
 - a) Served twenty-four months of continuous active duty; or
 - b) Completed a full minimum obligated limited tour of duty of more than six but less than twenty-four months approved by the Director, DCP
2. Released from active duty under honorable conditions and not for poor performance or misconduct.

PHS COs who came on active duty prior to October 17, 1981 and served 180 consecutive days of active duty are also eligible for Veteran's benefits. Additional information regarding Veteran's Benefits can be accessed through <http://www.usphs.gov/VABenefits.htm> or <http://www.va.gov>.

Statement of Service

Officers can prove their eligibility for Veteran benefits by presenting their "Statement of Service". Statements of Service are automatically issued to all officers leaving active duty. If needed for proof of eligibility prior to leaving active duty, they may be obtained from the Transactions and Application Branch (TAB), DCP, (301) 594-3112.

Transactions and Applications Branch/DCP
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 4-35
Rockville, MD 200857-0001

DoD/Uniformed Services Benefits

Officers and their dependents are issued Uniformed Services identification and privilege cards after the officer has reported for duty. Officers and their dependents have access to benefits present at DoD and Uniformed Services installations by showing proof of eligibility with a Uniformed Services identification and privilege card. These benefits include entry into commissaries base/post exchanges and officer's clubs, usage of recreation facilities, temporary lodging, banking and insurance offers and flight privileges. For more information on DoD benefits refer to <http://www.usphs.gov/DODBenefits.htm>.

Other Insurances

Additional insurances for things such as home and automobiles can be acquired through uniformed services professional associations. More information regarding these benefits may be found at <http://dcp.psc.gov/LinksOfInterest.asp#pacs>.

Billets

Billet Types

A billet is a description of the significant duties, responsibilities, qualifications and requirements to perform a particular assignment or job in the Commissioned Corps. The billet is somewhat comparable to the Position Description of Federal Civil Service employees. In addition to providing COs with specifics of what is expected of them in a particular assignment, the Public Health Services billet program also:

1. Serves as a source of accumulated information on the experience and training needed in the Commission Corps; and
2. Assists management in reviewing the organizational structure of the Commission Corps and long-range planning of human resource needs.

There are three types of billets:

1. Standard Categorical Billets - Billets that have been developed by categorical Professional Advisory Committees for specific job categories such as those billets developed by the Pharmacy Professional Advisory Committee for Pharmacists and those billets developed by the Dietitian Professional Advisory Committee for Dietitians, etc. They are to be applied to the majority officers engaged in that category.
2. Agency Specific Billets - Billets developed by a particular agency for positions specific to that agency.
3. Nonstandard Billets - Billets developed by a program in an agency such as a billet developed for a particular position in the Clinical Center. Nonstandard billets are to be applied to document the work of officers performing duties that are unique.

A billet rating and an officer's grade do not have to necessarily be the same. Thus, a CO who has a grade of 0-5 may be in a 0-6 billet. Usually an officer's grade is no more than one grade below or above the assignment or billet.

Along the same lines, when an officer is being considered for a promotion, the officer's current grade is not the major criteria. A more important factor is the level of work an officer is performing.

Updating/Changing A Billet

In order to update or change an officer's billet, the following must be submitted to Personnel Operations Section, CC/OHRM:

1. Form PHS 1662 - Request For Personnel Action.
2. Form PHS-4392-1, Billet Description if a non-standard billet.

To place an officer in a standard Research Officer Group (ROG) billet, Form PHS-1662, an updated copy of the officer's CV and bibliography and a memo from the officer's program Chief, concurred by the Director, CC. The Deputy Director Intramural Research (DDIR) must also approve the ROG determination and accompanying billet.

To place an officer in a non-standard Research Officer Group (ROG) Billet, Form PHS-1662, a copy of the non-standard billet, an updated copy of the officer's CV and bibliography and a memo from the officer's program Chief, concurred by the Director, CC. The Deputy Director Intramural Research (DDIR) must also approve the ROG determination and accompanying billet.

Lead Times For Submitting Paperwork To CC/OHRM For Updating/Changing A Billet..... *2 Months*

Probationary Period

When individuals are first called to active duty in the Commissioned Corps, they are placed in the Reserve Corps. All COs are required to serve a 3-year probationary period in the reserve corps. This allows ample time for evaluation of the officer's commitment to the Corps, performance, and ability to undertake new assignments. During this period, supervisors complete Retention Recommendation For Officers In The Probationary Period forms to verify the officer's continued satisfactory performance. Certain occupational categories may only be capable of retaining a proportion of officers beyond the 3-year probationary period due to designated retention numbers for that particular category. During the probationary period, the officer can be removed from active duty for:

- a. Unsatisfactory conduct prior to call to active duty.
- b. Abolishment of an officer's position.
- c. Displaying character/behavior unbecoming of an officer.
- d. Failure to perform duties at a satisfactory level, and lack of commitment to the Commission Corps.

- e. Refusal to accept reassignment.
- f. Failure to give complete and fully accurate information when initially applying to the Commissioned Corps.

A reserve officer serves a probationary period for not only the first call to active duty, but also each successive call to duty, whether it is call to active duty, a reassignment, detail or transfer. For example, a reserve officer who has served the first two years of an initial call to active duty at one agency and then transfers to another agency will begin a new three year probationary period which will begin on the effective date of the transfer to the new agency.

Before the end of the reserve officer's probationary period, DCP will review the officer's conduct and performance during the probationary period to discern whether the officer should be retained. If it is determined that the reserve officer on probation will be terminated, the officer will be provided with a notice 30 days prior to the action.

After successful completion of the probationary period, career-oriented reserve officers who possess long-term commitments to the Public Health Service mission may apply for Assimilation into the Regular Corps. The Regular Corps is the career component of the Commissioned Corps.

Assimilation

An officer cannot be considered for assimilation into the regular corps until the officer has served a 3-year probationary period. Previously, a CO had to have completed four years of continuous active duty during the current tour to apply for Assimilation. Starting in 2001, an officer must have completed a minimum of **only two years** of continuous active duty during the current tour to apply for Assimilation. Although an officer may now apply for Assimilation after two years of continuous active duty, the officer's Assimilation application will not be reviewed until after the officer has three years of service.

At the end of each Assimilation cycle, DCP sends letters to all COs regarding the status of their application for Assimilation. When an officer is not nominated for Assimilation by the DCP Assimilation Board, the officer will be considered for Assimilation two more times, for a total of three times. After the third time, if the officer has not been assimilated and is still interested, the officer must submit a new complete application package. DCP does not send follow up memos to remind officers that they need to reapply.

Officers applying for assimilation must:

- a. Demonstrate the ability and commitment to a career in the Public Health Service.
- b. Meet appointment standards for the specific professional career field.
- c. Meet required medical criterion.
- d. Have received a "D" or "E" overall rating on the most recent COER.
- e. Be recommended for assimilation by the supervisor on the most recent COER.
- f. Receive a rank-order recommendation from:
 - 1) The Director, Clinical Center.
 - 2) The Agency, NIH after further ranking.
- g. If the officer is serving in a permanent Full, Senior, or Director grade, the program must provide evidence that the officer will make outstanding contributions.

Recommendations for Assimilation are requested by DCP once a year. Application packages should include:

1. A form PHS-7034, "Application for Assimilation Into The Regular Corps".
2. A current CV.
3. A statement from the officer stating the reasons for requesting consideration for appointment into the Regular Corps.
4. A recommending memo signed by the appropriate Department Head and Director, CC.

The original copy of the Assimilation Application package should be submitted by the CO directly to DCP:

Division of Commissioned Personnel
ATTN: Assimilation Coordinator, PSB
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 4-36
Rockville, MD 20857-0001

Two copies of the Assimilation application packages should be retained. Upon request, these materials should be submitted to Mr. Avery G. Jackson, CC/OHRM for review. All assimilation packages are then forwarded to Building 10, Rm. 2C146 for review. After reviewing all the assimilation packages, the Director, CC will rank order the assimilation nominations. The rank order nominations are then forwarded for Agency review and ranking. The Agency recommendations are then sent to the DCP where an Assimilation Board will further review them.

For further information regarding the Assimilation process please refer to <http://dcp.psc.gov/assimilation.asp>.

Tours of Duty

Tour of Duty

Generally, COs are assigned to established tours of duty within the Agency to which they are assigned. However, the Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual (CCPM) states that COs are subject to duty 24 hours, 365 days a year. Subsequently, a CO is not entitled to overtime pay or compensatory time for work beyond regularly scheduled hours of duty. In addition, an officer on leave may be recalled to duty at any time.

Special Limited Tours of Duty

A special limited tour of duty is a call to active duty in the reserve corps limited to a specific period of time due to certain circumstances. The three common types of special limited tours of duty are:

1. **Licensure Limited Tour**
When an individual meets all other criteria to be called to active duty, but does not meet the licensure requirements for an occupational category as established by the Commissioned Corps Appointment Standards and Appointment Boards, the individual would receive a licensure limited tour. The officer is required to show proof of licensure before the licensure limitation can be removed. However, use of licensure limited tours in the Clinical Center is restricted to Nursing Senior COSTEPS, who immediately upon graduation are called to active duty to fulfill their service requirements, but cannot acquire their license until after they have graduated. Nursing Senior COSTEPS are given one year to acquire their license.
2. **Medical Limited Tour**
When an individual meets all other criteria to be called to active duty, but does not meet the physical standards, the individual may receive a medical limited tour. Medical limited tours can be granted for a period of 1-4 years, and may be extended for up to six years. Medical limited tours can be extended or removed at the discretion of the Medical Branch of the DCP contingent upon the officer in question meeting the required physical standards.
3. **Special Program Limited Tour**
Special program limited tours are tours whose lengths are related to the nature of the program in which the officer is participating. For example officers in the Research Associate and Clinical Associate Programs are initially put on calls to active duty for a minimum of two years. Tours for Clinical and Research Associates can be extended in increments of one year up to a maximum of ten years.

Individuals targeted for a tenure-track are initially put on calls to active duty for a minimum of two years. Tours for tenure-track officers can be extended in increments of one year up to a maximum of six years.

In order to extend a Limited Tour of Duty a PHS-1662, Request for Personnel Action, must be submitted to Personnel Operations Section, CC/OHRM.

Lead Time For Submitting Paperwork To Extend a Limited Tour of Duty..... 3 Months

Short Tours of Active Duty

Inactive reserve officers who are needed on a temporary basis to meet certain manpower needs are given a short tour of duty. A short tour of duty consists of a specified period of time that usually does not exceed 120 days. In situations where it is necessary to meet the needs of the program, short tours of active duty may be extended. However, an officer cannot serve more than 240 days in a fiscal year under a short tour of active duty.

Short Tours of Active Duty, which are used to compensate long periods of annual or sick leave, provide expertise or training, or meet impermanent additional manpower needs, are known as Regular Short Tours of Active Duty. Short Tours of Active Duty, which are used to meet needs in time of extenuating, circumstances such as natural disasters, and national emergencies are known as Emergency Short Tours of Active Duty.

Programs that require a need for inactive officers on short tours of active duty should contact the Inactive Reserve Coordinator at the Inactive Reserve Program (IRP), Transactions and Application Branch (TAB), DCP at (301) 594-3112. Programs should provide the Inactive Reserve Coordinator with specific information regarding the necessary specialties of officers requested, how many and an approximate time frame of how long the officers will be needed.

Once the appropriate officers have been found, the program should submit the following materials to the Personnel Operations Section to be reviewed and forwarded to activate the short tour of duty:

1. Form PHS-1662 - Request For Personnel Action. The Form PHS-1662 should state whether the assignment that the officer will undertake is a standard or non-standard billet.

2. If the assignment is non-standard, a Billet Description Form PHS-4392-1 must be submitted with the Form PHS-1662. The Form PHS-1662 should include a beginning and ending date for the short tour of active duty and a statement indicating that the short tour of active duty is not to exceed (nte) 120 calendar days.
3. Confirmation of the availability of monies to pay the inactive reserve officer's salary and any other costs associated with the officer's short tour of duty. Evidence of the confirmation is given by acquiring the signature of the Budget Office Chief, CC on the designated line in section #14 of the Form PHS-1662. Any travel allowances given should be included on the Form PHS-1662.

Intermittent Tours of Active Duty

If appropriate and necessary, inactive reserve officers can be given intermittent tours of active duty. However, no period of work can exceed five consecutive days, including travel. The inactive officer may also work no more than 52 days in one fiscal year.

Programs that require a need for inactive officers on intermittent tours of active duty should submit a memo addressed to the Inactive Reserve Program (IRP), detailing the necessary specialties of officers requested, how many and an approximate time frame of how long the officers will be needed. The memorandum with the CC Director's signature should be submitted to CC/OHRM where it will be sent to SASE and forwarded to the IRP.

Once the appropriate officers have been found, the program should submit the following materials to Personnel Operations Section to be forwarded to activate the intermittent tour of active duty.

1. Form PHS-1662 - Request For Personnel Action. The Form PHS-1662 should indicate that an intermittent duty is being requested, that the intermittent duty is not to exceed (nte) 52 days in one fiscal year, and no single period of duty will exceed five calendar days including travel.
2. The Form PHS-1662 should indicate the beginning and ending dates of the intermittent duty.
3. The Form PHS-1662 should state whether the assignment that the officer will undertake is a standard or non-standard billet. If the assignment is non-standard, a Billet Description Form PHS-4392-1 must be submitted with the Form PHS-1662.
4. Confirmation of the availability monies to pay the inactive reserve officer's salary and any other costs associated with the officer's short tour of duty. Evidence of the confirmation is given by acquiring the signature of the CC Budget Office Chief on the designated line in section #14 of the 1662
5. Any travel allowances given should be included on the Form PHS-1662.

Lead Time For Submitting Paperwork To CC/OHRM..... 3 Months

Leave

Annual Leave

Commissioned Officers earn 30 days of annual leave for each year of full active service. Annual leave is to be used for vacation and personal situations.

For less than a year of active service, annual leave is earned at a rate of two and one-half days for every month of service.

Annual leave is not accrued when:

1. An officer is absent without authorized leave.
2. An officer is on leave without pay.
3. An officer is on a short tour of duty for less than 30 days.

The maximum amount of unused annual leave that can be carried forward from one year to the next is 60 days. This limit is statute imposed and cannot be waived under any exceptional circumstances.

An officer must request annual leave by filling out a Form PHS - 1345, "Request and Authority for Leave of Absence." Annual leave must be taken in whole day increments. The original and two copies of the form should be submitted to the supervisor for approval.

If the leave request is approved, the supervisor gives the original Form PHS - 1345 and one copy to back to the officer and submits the other copy to the timekeeper.

When the officer returns from leave, the officer should fill out item 4 on the original Form PHS-1345 and submits it to the timekeeper. The timekeeper keeps the original Form PHS -1345 and destroys the copy.

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

The Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps is a Uniformed Service, as is the Navy, Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Uniformed Services are not covered under the FMLA and thus, COs are not covered by the FMLA. COs are required to use the appropriate leave for absences.

Sick Leave

In the Commissioned Corps, sick leave is not accrued. Sick leave is authorized as needed when a CO is unable to perform duties due to illness. When an officer is out on sick leave for more than three days, the officer may be required to submit medical documentation confirming inability to perform duties.

An officer must request sick leave by filling out a Form PHS - 1345, "Request and Authority for Leave of Absence". This form should be filled out for each instance of sick leave of one day or more. At the discretion of the supervisor, an officer can be required to fill out a Form PHS - 1345 for less than a full day of sick leave. If an absence due to illness is for longer than three days and no medical documentation is submitted, the remarks section of Form PHS-1345 should be filled out regarding the reasons for the extended sick leave. The original PHS - 1345 and any accompanying medical documentation should be forwarded to:

Chief, Medical Branch
Division of Commissioned Personnel
Parklawn Building, Rm. 4C15
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

A copy of the leave form should be forwarded to the timekeeper.

Maternity Leave

Maternity leave is granted as an approved period of sick leave for pregnancy and delivery. The length of time for maternity leave for a CO is contingent upon the physician's evaluation of the officer's fitness for duty. Post-delivery sick leave is usually four to six weeks.

Terminal Leave

Terminal Leave is annual leave that is authorized by the supervisor prior to the officer's submitting the request for separation from active duty but is taken after the officer submits the form PHS-1373, Separation of CO. Terminal leave can be taken all at one or can be divided into segments. An officer on terminal leave is still considered to be on Active Duty, however, may accept outside employment offers if prior approval has been obtained from the supervisor and DCP.

All terminal leave must be requested and approved on form PHS-1345, "Request and Authorization for Leave." It is essential that terminal leave be approved **before** the PHS-1373 is submitted to DCP. Failure to do so could result in improper payment to the officer for unused leave. If terminal leave is approved after the original PHS-1373 has been submitted to DCP, the TAB should be notified immediately at (301) 594-3112.

Training

COs are assigned to short-term and long-term training based on their professional aspirations and the needs of PHS and the Commissioned Corps. Officers trained in the Commissioned Corps incur an active-duty service obligation.

Commissioned Officer training is divided into two groups, short-term training and long-term training.

Short-term Training

Short-term training is defined as:

- a) Full-time training that does not exceed 30 consecutive days nor a total of 90 calendar days in a fiscal year.
- b) Part-time training that does not exceed 70 hours in attendance within a 30-day period nor a total of 210 hours in a fiscal year.
- c) Training that may generally be authorized by program officials, such as supervisors and managers.

Short-term training that leads to an academic degree is classified and processed as long-term training.

To request approval for short-term non-degree related training an officer should complete form HHS-350, "Training Nomination and Authorization" and forward it to the designated program official for approval.

Once the request has been approved and the officer has completed the training, the original HHS-350 should be stamped "COMPLETED" and forwarded by the CO's supervisor to DCP so that record of the training can be noted in the CO's official personnel folder (OPF).

Long-term Training

Long-term training is defined as:

- a) Training that must be approved by the Director, DCP.
- b) Training that includes internship or residency training for a period that exceed the definition of short-term training.
- c) Training that is comprised of several units, which are required, in a formal organized educational program that leads to an academic degree, regardless of whether these courses are taken intermittently or continuously, full-time or part-time.

All long-term training requests must be submitted to DCP by March 15th for training that begins July 1st or later in the year. Long-term training requests are made by the submission of form PHS-1122-1, "Application for Training for Commissioned Personnel." The CO requesting the training initially completes Parts I and II of the form PHS-1122-1 then forwards it to the supervisor to complete item 22. The supervisor forwards the form per the instructions specified on the form.

If the request is approved, a form PHS-1662, "Request for Personnel Action" must be submitted to DCP to generate a personnel order placing the officer in training status.

Extramural Training

Extramural Training can be short-term or long-term training that is not directly coordinated by PHS but is relevant to the officer's career goals. This type of training requires an officer to make a 12-month active-duty service obligation for each 6 months of extramural training.

Payment for Training

A CO's assigned program will pay for the officer's participation in a training program or training at an educational institution. An officer participating in a training program may be reimbursed for items purchased to successfully complete the training such as books, materials and supplies.

Awards

Honor Awards

A CO can be nominated for an award by an immediate supervisor, a co-worker or anyone outside PHS who is aware of achievements made by the CO worthy of recognition. Junior and Senior COSTEPS are not eligible for honor or service awards.

There are six honor awards designated for individual COs. There are also two honor awards designated for groups. These groups can be composed of either just COs or COs and Civil Servants; as long as there is one CO to be nominated. A CO cannot receive two individual honor awards during one award cycle year, July 1 - June 30.

The six honor awards for individuals are the following, listed in order of lowest to highest priority:

1. PHS Citation
2. Achievement Medal
3. Commendation Medal
4. Outstanding Service Medal
5. Meritorious Service Medal
6. Distinguished Service Medal

The two honor awards for groups are the following, listed in order of lowest to highest priority:

1. Unit Commendation
2. Outstanding Unit Commendation

Service Awards

In addition to the individual and group honor awards mentioned above, there are seven service awards given to officers who finish assignments that contain hardships. The service awards are:

1. National Emergency Preparedness Award
2. Foreign Duty Award
3. Hazardous Duty Award
4. Isolated Hardship Award
5. Special Assignment Award
6. Crisis Response Service Award
7. Smallpox Eradication Campaign Ribbon

For more information on and descriptions of the service and honor awards, reference should be made to the following website at http://dcp.psc.gov/PDF_docs/2711f.pdf.

In order to nominate an officer for an honor or service award, the following materials should be submitted:

1. Form PHS 6342-1 "Unit Honor Award Nomination Record" or Form PHS 6342-2 "Individual Honor Award Nomination Record".
2. A supporting narrative of no more than two pages, twelve characters per inch, which discusses the CO's achievements and their impact. It is recommended that the memo be in bullet form, using clear and concise language.

The nomination materials and the required number of copies should be submitted to the CC Awards Coordinators, Sue Fishbein or Jeannie Harrison at 6100 Executive Blvd., Rm. 3E01, for review and submission to the Division of Senior and Scientific Employment, SASE and eventually to DCP for final approval. Nomination materials are requested once a year by the CC Awards Coordinators, in early Spring. Information regarding the results of the Awards process is disseminated by the CC Awards Coordinators upon receipt from DCP.

Cash Awards

Commissioned Officers **are not eligible** for the performance-based cash awards given to Civil Service employees. However, COs can receive cash awards for suggestions and inventions which improve the efficiency of the Federal Government. COs may also receive cash awards for Scientific Achievement. Suggestions are initially submitted on Form HHS-170, "Employee Suggestion Form" and submitted to the designated suggestion coordinator or immediate supervisor. Inventions are reported on Form HHS-570, "Employee Invention Report" and submitted to the Patents Branch, Office of the General Counsel.

If a cash award is eventually found to be appropriate, Form HHS-171, "Recommendation for Cash Award" and all required accompanying material should be submitted to the CC Awards Coordinators for review and submission to the Director, DCP for approval.

Board & Committee Nominations

The Commissioned Corps has various Professional and Advisory Committees such as the Nursing Professional Advisory Committee, the Therapist Professional Advisory Committee, and Pharmacy Professional Advisory Committee. These committees address various issues and concerns regarding their respective professional category in the Commissioned Corps such as determining professional standards, advising and providing professional category specific information to the Surgeon General as requested. Nominations for these Professional Advisory Committees are requested once a year. COs can nominate themselves or be nominated by their Department Head. A signature indicating support of nomination is requested from Department Heads for self-nominating officers. Based on the supported nominations, a list is formed and forwarded to the Surgeon General who will choose the new members from the list.

The Commissioned Corps has committees such as the Black COs Advisory Group (BCOAG), the Asian Pacific Officers Committee (APOC), and the Hispanic Officers Advisory Committee (HOAC). These groups were established to offer recommendations and advice to the Surgeon General on issues relevant to these specific communities with the Commissioned Corps. Nominations for these Committees are requested once a year. COs can nominate themselves or be nominated by their Department Chief. A signature indicating support of nomination is requested from Department Chiefs for self-nominating officers. Based on the supported nominations, a list is formed and forwarded to the Surgeon General who will choose the new members from the list.

There are also Assimilation and Promotion Boards with members for each of the professional categories. The members of these boards meet to evaluate and recommend reserve officers for assimilation into the regular corps and regular and reserve corps officers for promotion. Nominations of officers to serve on the Promotion and Assimilation Boards are requested once a year. Officers are nominated by their Clinical Center Department Heads. Nominees for the promotion boards may be either reserve or regular corps officers. Nominees for the assimilation boards must be regular COs. COs may not serve two years in succession. The names of nominees are submitted by the CC Department Head to CC/OHRM. The names are forwarded to SASE and then sent to the Director, DCP. The Director, DCP has the authority to appoint officers to the promotion and assimilation boards and to convene the boards.

Commissioned Officers Effectiveness Reports (COER)

Commissioned Officers Effectiveness Report (COER)

The job performance of a CO is evaluated annually on Form PHS-838, "Commissioned Officers Effectiveness Report (COER)." Completion of PHS-838 is essential. All required parties should thoroughly and promptly complete the COER after the CO initially receives it in the mail in April or May. The COER is the formal evaluation of a CO's job performance. As such, the COER has multiple usages:

1. A measurement tool by which the supervisor can evaluate the officer's performance against job expectations and the officer's career goals.
2. It assists in selecting training that will enable the officer to realize career potential.
3. The COER familiarizes potential supervisors of the officer with his capabilities, strengths and weaknesses.
4. It supplies information concerning the CO's abilities during review processes such as those conducted by the assimilation, promotion and retirement boards.

As with Civil Service employees, supervisors should inform COs of the job's expectations. Performance achievements should be discussed with the CO mid-way through the performance period. However, a COER is **not** prepared for mid-period. Any performance deficiencies should be documented and brought to the CO's attention as soon as they are discovered with counseling and guidance administered as needed. The rating period for COs is July 1 to June 30.

Annual COERs should be completed for all officers except those who are:

1. Junior and Senior COSTEPS
2. Commissioned Officers on short tours of duty (nte 120 days)
3. Commissioned Officers on intermittent tours

There are four sections to the Form PHS 838, "Commissioned Officers Effectiveness Report":

Section I

The CO fills out this section. The CO should then submit the COER to his supervisor, the rating official.

Sections II & III

The rating official fills out these sections. It is imperative that in section III the rating official provide written comments for all "A" & "E" ratings. The comments provided must support the letter rating and must be in whole sentences. Written comments **cannot** consist of just one word. DCP has stated that COERs with comments of just one word will be returned. If there is not enough room on the form, comments can be continued on a separate piece of paper. Again, it should be emphasized that the Assimilation and Promotion Boards utilize the COER in the review process. Therefore, it is essential that the ratings and comments given accurately reflect the rating official's perception of the CO's performance.

Section IV

The CO completes section IV, item 1 of the COER once the comments have been discussed with the rating official. The rating official's supervisor, the reviewing official, completes Section IV, item 2 after reviewing the COER. If the CO disagrees with the rating official's comments, the reviewing official needs to meet with the CO to discuss the concerns. If the reviewing official disagrees with the rating official, he/she should indicate this in the appropriate area in this section of the COER. If the reviewing official disagrees with the rating, it is the reviewing official's duty to make sure that the CO receives a copy of Section IV of the COER, which indicates this disagreement.

The CO being evaluated should complete attachment 1. The CO should list duties, goals and accomplishments. Duties, goals and accomplishments must be limited to the Attachment 1 page. No other attachments will be accepted.

Attachment 2 is reserved for the rater's comments relating to the ratings assigned in Section III and any additional comments relating to the officer's performance. Rater's comments must be limited to the Attachment 2 page. No other attachments will be accepted.

Besides the COER, a PHS-6385, "Status Report On COs During Probation" is required for all officers with less than 3 years of active duty.

Narrative COERS

In lieu of completing the entire COER form, Sections I, II, & V of the COER form should be completed and a narrative COER done and attached to the form if:

1. The officer has been on duty for less than six months.
2. An officer is involved in long-term training.

Interim COERS

An interim COER should be prepared for a CO if:

1. An officer is signing a special pay contract and has not been formally evaluated on a COER in the past twelve months.
2. An officer is being permanently transferred to another station.
3. If an officer's supervisor/rating official is going to be reassigned.
4. If an officer is having deficiencies, to measure improvement.
5. If the last COER on file was a narrative COER.
6. If the last COER on file does not evaluate a minimum of six months job performance.

Conversions

Individuals who are Civil Service employees can convert to the Commissioned Corps. They must meet all of the minimum qualifications previously discussed and are expected to have mobility at the moment or very soon for the next three to four years. When the applicant is going to attempt to stay in the same PHS agency and program, in the same position in which they are currently working as a Civil Servant, the following should be submitted to CC/OHRM:

1. A memo from the Department Head through the Director, CC to the Director, DCP highlighting the benefits to the PHS of converting the applicant to the Commissioned Corps.
2. A cost comparison of the potential officer's pay as a Civil Servant and as a potential CO.

The paperwork described above should be submitted to CC/OHRM. After review, the memo will be forwarded to the Director, CC for approval and signature. Once it is signed, it is forwarded to SASE and then to the Director, DCP for final review and approval.

If the Director, DCP approves the conversion, the applicant must submit all of the application materials listed in the Call To Active Duty section on page 5 of this manual to CC/OHRM for processing.

COSTEPS

The Junior and Senior CO Student Training and Extern Program (COSTEP) programs are two of the Commissioned Corps student training programs.

The Junior COSTEP program gives undergraduate and graduate students of health disciplines the opportunity to work during breaks in the academic term. When a Junior COSTEP officer has been selected the following paperwork should be submitted to CC/OHRM to be forwarded to SASE and DCP for processing:

1. Form PHS-6279, Statement of Duties
2. Form PHS-1662, Request for Personnel Action

The Senior COSTEP program allows students in their last year of school to work during the final year in exchange for a 16-month obligation to serve on active duty for 8 months of training. When a Senior COSTEP officer has been selected the following paperwork should be submitted to CC/OHRM to be forwarded to SASE and DCP for processing:

1. Form PHS-6279, Statement of Duties
2. Form PHS-1662, Request for Personnel Action
3. Form PHS-1122-1, Application for Training for PHS Commissioned Personnel

Separations and Retirement

Separation

Separation occurs when an officer leaves active duty. There are three categories of separation, with different types under each category.

1. Voluntary Separations
 - a. Retirement
 - b. Termination
 - c. Inactivation
2. Involuntary Separations
 - a. Probationary Separation
 - b. Involuntary separation (after the probationary period and prior to retirement eligibility)
 - c. Involuntary 20 year Retirement
 - d. Involuntary 30 year Retirement
3. Disability Separations
 - a. Without benefits
 - b. With severance pay

Voluntary Separations

Retirement

Retirements can be voluntary or involuntary. To be eligible for retirement, an officer must:

1. Have 20 years active duty, (10 of these years must be in the PHS); or
2. Have reached the age of 64; or
3. Be disabled from a service-connected medical problem.

The Commissioned Corps personnel system is based on a career of 30 years of service. Pay increases are contingent upon years of service. By law, all retirements (except disability) are made effective on the first day of the month.

The common types of retirements are:

1. **20 Year Retirement**
 An officer who has at least 20 years of active duty but less than 30 years of active duty is eligible to retire and may request permission to do so. This is called a permissive retirement. In order to request a permissive retirement the officer should submit:
 - a. A memo from the officer to the Director, DCP requesting permissive retirement. The request should state the intent to retire after (?) years of service, an effective date, and any other relevant facts.
 - b. A cover memo by the officer's supervisor to accompany the officer's retirement request. This memo should also be addressed to the Director, DCP and address the following factors in the specific order in which they are given:
 - i. Program and agency recommendation for approval or disapproval of the officer's request
 - ii. Effect of the retirement on continued and effective operation of the program to which the officer is assigned
 - iii. Availability of a suitable replacement
 - iv. Availability of other assignments for which there is a need for the officer
 - v. Whether retirement is in the interest of national or international health (such as if officer is retiring to work with an international organization)
 - vi. Years of service creditable for retirement eligibility, exclusive of service in other uniformed services
 - vii. Extreme personal hardship potentially affecting the performance of the officer if the officer remains on active service, indicating the officer's retirement will be in the best interest of the PHS

The prepared memos **should not** include a line for Agency concurrence. A concurrence line **should** be included for the Director, CC. The officer's memo and the accompanying supervisor's memo should be submitted to CC/OHRM for review. The request is sent to the Director, CC for signature and returned to CC/OHRM. The request is then forwarded

to SASE and then to the Director, DCP. The Surgeon General makes the final decision on the retirement question based on input from program management, the officer's supervisor and the retirement board.

Once the permissive retirement request has been approved by the Surgeon General, the officer should submit the original copy of PHS-1373, Separation of Commissioned Officer, to the TAB, DCP no later than 30 days before the last day of active duty. The remaining copies should be sent forward for signature by the officer, the officer's supervisor and the CC Budget Office. Once all signatures have been acquired, it should be submitted along with the CO's timecards to CC/OHRM. The paperwork is forwarded to SASE, then DCP for processing.

2. **30 Year Retirement**

An officer who has 30 years or more of active duty may retire anytime without the approval of the retirement board. The officer need only submit form PHS-1373 and the accompanying paperwork to DCP no later than 30 days before the last day of active duty.

A CO who is eligible for a voluntary 30-year retirement and does not submit his PHS-1373, will involuntarily be retired on the first day of the month following his/her 30 year anniversary date. However, a request can be submitted by the Director, NIH to the Director, DCP requesting that a CO be retained beyond 30 years. Heads of Agencies can request retention for up to 15 per cent of the officers under their respective jurisdiction. Memos from Agency Heads listing all officers for whom retention is being requested and the support for the request is due to the Director, DCP by June 1. The Director, DCP reviews the requests and forwards them through the Retirement Board to the Surgeon General; who makes the final decision on the retention request. Officers approved for retention can only remain on active duty for one year after the 30-year anniversary date, unless another retention request is submitted.

Clinical Center Departments who are interested in retaining officers beyond 30 years should prepare a memo to the Director, DCP to be signed by the Director, NIH, requesting retention and stating the specific reasons for the retention. The memo should be submitted to CC/OHRM for review and forwarding to the Director, CC, SASE and the Director, DCP.

3. **Age-64 retirement**

A CO who is 64 years of age may retire anytime without approval of the retirement board. The officer need only submit form PHS-1373 and the accompanying paperwork to DCP no later than 30 days before the last day of active duty.

Paperwork for Retirements should be sent to:

Personnel Services Branch/DCP
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 4-35
Rockville, MD 20857-0001
(301) 594-3108

Termination

When an officer voluntarily terminates her/his commission with the Commissioned Corps, the officer no longer has any obligations to the Commission Corps if all previous obligations have been fulfilled during active duty. In order to effect a termination, the CO should complete a form PHS-1373 and check the appropriate box to indicate termination.

Inactivation

Inactivation occurs when an officer separates from active duty but asks for appointment to the inactive reserve through the inactive reserve program previously discussed. COs seeking an Inactive Reserve Appointment must have completed two years of active duty. Along with the PHS-1373, the officer must submit a memo from her/his supervisor recommending for or against the officer's appointment to inactive reserve. The memo should be addressed to the Director, DCP. It should address the benefits to the PHS of the officer's continued association with the Commissioned Corps through the Inactive Reserve Program.

Involuntary Separations

Probationary Separation

As previously stated, the first three years of each Call To Active Duty for an officer is a probationary period. During this period an officer can be involuntarily separated without any type of formal review. Officers are separated during the probationary for the following reasons given on page 12.

Involuntary Separation (after the probationary period and prior to retirement eligibility)

During this time period, the involuntary separation of an officer, for reasons such as those stated above, requires strict adherence to administrative procedures established to deal with these matters. Except for reductions-in-strength, involuntary separations during this time are considered adverse actions.

For guidance regarding involuntary separations of this nature, please consult with your Personnel Management Specialist and refer to <http://dcp.psc.gov/disciplinaryactions.asp>.

Involuntary 20 year Retirement

Officers who have completed twenty years of service may be recommended for involuntary retirement if:

1. The officer's performance is below the level expected for that particular occupational category and grade. Evidence of poor performance can be reflected in a poor COER evaluation, or not being recommended for a permanent or temporary promotion after being considered by the annual promotion boards.
2. There is not an appropriate assignment for the officer.
3. A necessary reduction-in-strength.
4. The officer engages in conduct unbecoming a CO such as omission or misrepresentation of facts in official statements or personal misconduct.
5. The officer is serving on extended active duty.

The Involuntary Retirement Board meets on an as needed basis each fiscal year.

For additional information please refer to <http://dcp.psc.gov/disciplinaryactions.asp>.

Involuntary 30 year Retirement

An officer who is eligible for a voluntary 30 year retirement and does not submit his PHS-1373, will involuntarily be retired on the first day of the month following his/her 30 year anniversary date. However, a request can be submitted by the Director, NIH to the Director, DCP requesting that an officer be retained beyond 30 years. For further instructions regarding retention, please refer back to the section on Voluntary Separations in this manual.

Disability Separations

Disability separations occur when a CO is found by the Medical Review Board, based on evidence presented, to be unable to perform the duties of his/her grade and category due to physical and/or mental conditions. The disabling condition must have been sustained in the line of duty or be service aggravated.

When an officer is believed to be medically unfit for duty, the Director DCP convenes a Medical Review Board. The Medical Review Board reviews the officer's performance reports and the medical evidence submitted. The Medical Review Board forwards the case to the Surgeon General with a recommendation.

The Medical Review Board's Recommendation will be:

- The officer is fit for duty. This could be full duty or limited duty. Limited duty status should not exceed one year; or
- The officer is found to be medically unfit for duty. If found to be unfit for duty, the Medical Affairs Branch, DCP, will inform the officer of this official status along with the determined percentage of disability. Officers found to be unfit for duty **cannot** be retained on active duty.

Without Benefits

If the officer is found to be disabled due to an injury sustained outside of the line of active duty or if the disability pre-existed and no service aggravation has occurred the CO is not eligible for benefits and must be separated without them.

With Severance pay

- If the CO is found to be disabled due to an injury sustained in the line of duty or if the disability is service aggravated the officer is eligible for compensation.

- If the CO has accumulated less than 20 years of service for retirement purposes and the combined percentage of disability is less than 30 percent the CO is not eligible for retirement with benefits and must be separated with severance pay.
- If the CO has accumulated at least 20 years of service **or** the combined percentage of disability is 30% or more, the officer must be retired.
- If the medical condition is unpredictable and deemed appropriate, the CO can be placed in temporary disability retirement for up to five years contingent upon stabilization of the condition.

Separation Paperwork

Regardless of the type of separation (voluntary, involuntary, retirement and inactivation), a form PHS-1373, Separation of CO is required for all separations. Please refer to the sample PHS-1373 in the Appendix.

The original copy, Part A, of PHS-1373 should be submitted directly to TAB, DCP no later than 30 days before the last day of active duty. The remaining copies should be sent forward for the signatures of the CO, the CO's supervisor, and the CC Budget Office. Once signatures have been acquired, it should be submitted along with the CO's timecards to CC/OHRM. The paperwork is forwarded to SASE, then DCP for processing.

All of the officer's Leave Record Cards PHS-31 should be balanced, including terminal leave, and certified by the timekeeper. They should be submitted to CC/OHRM to be forwarded to SASE. PHS-31's should be submitted no later than 60 days prior to the officer's separation in order for the officer to receive a lump-sum payment.

Paperwork for Separations should be sent to:

Transactions and Applications Branch/DCP
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 4-35
Rockville, MD 200857-0001
(301) 594-3112

Corps Permissive Retirement & Subsequent Appointment in the CS to the Same Position

In rare instances, the Director, NIH will appoint COs approved for permissive retirement to the same position in the Civil Service (CS). This consideration is made only for officers whose work is of a very high caliber, which is supported by documented review by the appropriate board, such as the Board of Scientific Directors.

This type of appointment is only done when it is apparent that an officer approved for permissive retirement would leave the NIH if he/she were not converted to CS. There should be proof that the officer would leave. This proof can be in the form of verbally confirmed or written job offers from one or more non-Federal agencies or confirmation in writing by the Director, CC that the officer in question is being actively pursued by non-Federal organizations and will probably leave the NIH if not given a CS appointment.

To acquire approval for this type of appointment the CC department where the officer works should prepare memo from the Director, CC to the Director, NIH requesting that the officer, pending permissive retirement, be appointed to the same position as a CS. Along with the memo, any job offers as described above and an updated copy of the officer's curriculum vitae (CV) should also be submitted to CC/OHRM. The request materials will be reviewed and signed by the Director, CC, sent to SASE and forwarded to the Director, NIH for review and final approval.

Research Officer Group (ROG) and Tenure

ROG

The designation of the ROG of the Commissioned Corps reflects the research nature of the NIH mission. The ROG designation is afforded to Doctoral individuals (e.g., M.D. or Ph.D.) who conduct independent and original biomedical research. The ROG designation gives these individuals an appropriate career track that reflects the innovative nature of their work.

Tenure-Track

Tenure-track is the research career track on which outstanding scientists are placed. A Tenure-Track designation bestows the scientist with the resources to conduct independent biomedical research and show his/her future potential for consideration for tenure.

Tenure

Tenure is a long-term commitment by NIH of salary and resources to an individual who has proven his/her ability to conduct innovative and original biomedical research.

Not every member of ROG is tenured. Members of ROG are considered for tenure after having previously been on a tenure-track and being given further review and consideration by the NIH Central Tenure Committee.

The progression to Tenure is as follows:

- *Clinical/Research Associate (Untenured ROG Membership)*
 - Doctoral Degree
 - Participation in a program of original Scientific Research not to exceed 10 years*
 - Not Eligible for Special Pays (RSP, ISP or MRB)
- *Clinical /Research Fellow (Untenured ROG Membership)*
 - Doctoral Degree
 - Minimum of 2 years Research experience
 - Participation in a program of original Scientific Research not to exceed 10 years*
 - Eligible for RSP and 2-year MRB only
- *Tenure-Track*
 - Doctoral Degree
 - Minimum of 2 years Research experience
 - Participation in a program of original Scientific Research not to exceed 10 years
 - Eligible for RSP and 2, 3 or 4-Year MRB
 - Research Officers may apply for Tenure-Track positions after three or four years as an un-tenured Clinical/Research Associate/Fellow
- *Tenure*
 - Doctoral Degree
 - Minimum of 2 years Research experience
 - Participation in a program of original Scientific Research not to exceed 10 years
 - Previously Tenure-Track.
 - Eligible for all special pays (RSP, ISP and MRB) for which qualified.

Conversion to Tenure Status Involves:

1. Initial Sponsorship By Lab/Branch Chief
2. Evaluation By Tenure Committee
3. Approval By Board of Scientific Counselors

For further information and instructions regarding Tenure and the Tenure process, please refer to the CC Guidelines and Procedures: Promotion and Tenure Review manual.

Promotions

Once the promotion materials are received and coordinated by CC/OHRM, the CC Executive Committee meets to review and determine the rank-order of officers in the CC. The resulting rank-order list is forwarded to the Director, CC for approval and signature. The listing and materials are then forwarded to the SASE where they are prepared for the agency review and ranking. Once the NIH review and ranking has been completed, the recommendations are sent to DCP for review and further ranking by the Promotion Board and final review and authorization by the Director, DCP.

Promotion Boards convene annually to consider officers eligible for promotion. An officer's promotion eligibility is based on training, experience and duration of active service in the current tour of duty. Temporary promotions are based on training and experience. Permanent promotions are based on training, experience and years of active service. Promotion Boards are convened for each professional category and the ROG. In being reviewed for consideration for promotion, each officer's career is reviewed in relation to six weighted precepts.

Six Precepts

1. **Performance**
As indicated in the officer's COER
2. **Mobility**
As reflected in assignment history (relating to programmatic and geographic mobility)
3. **Awards**
Indicating the quality of an officer's service
4. **Career Progression**
Assignments indicate the level of responsibility achieved
5. **Career Potential**
The quality of performance as responsibilities increased
6. **Agency Recommendation**
As indicated in the memorandum forwarded for each officer under consideration for promotion

In considering officers for promotion under these six precepts, the promotion board considers various factors under each precept.

1. **Performance**
 - a) Performance on annual COERs;
 - b) Performance history over time;
2. **Mobility**
 - a) Career track and primary job;
 - b) Needs of the service;
 - c) Length of service;
 - d) Personal hardship;
 - e) Overall performance in each assignment;
3. **Awards**
 - a) The officer's agency assignments;
 - b) Length of service;
 - c) Grade;
 - d) PHS awards;
 - e) Non-PHS awards;
4. **Career Progression**
 - a) Billet grade;
 - b) Level of responsibility;
 - c) Independence;
 - d) Managerial and supervisory responsibilities;
 - e) Contributions to PHS;
 - f) Contributions to professional category;
 - g) Impact of service;
5. **Career Potential**
 - a) Future demand for officer's services;
 - b) Possibility of a 30 year career;
 - c) Long-term commitment to the Commissioned Corps;
 - d) Potential to perform at a higher grade;
 - e) Impact on PHS mission/programs;
 - f) Integrity and ethics displayed by officer;
6. **Agency Recommendations**
 - a) The officers efforts in relation to fulfilling the mission of the agency;
 - b) The added value to the agency from the officer's efforts;

- c) Other agency-relevant factors;

For each officer being considered for promotion, the promotion board reviews the CO's OPF and related documents submitted for the CO against the above stated precepts and their accompanying factors. Based on this review, the promotion board designates a numerical score for each officer. Based on the scores, all the officers are listed in rank order. This list is forwarded to the Director, DCP for final authorization and approval. Promotions are also contingent upon the number of promotion vacancies available. Based on the number of vacancies available, a cut-off score is determined. Officers below the cut-off score cannot be promoted during the present promotion cycle.

Some officers have a permanent or (P) grade and temporary (T) at the same time. COs salaries are based on their temporary grade. A CO's temporary grade will usually be higher than the permanent grade because temporary promotions do not involve the duration of active service requirement that is necessary for a permanent promotion. An officer may be eligible for both a temporary promotion and a permanent promotion during a promotion cycle. In this scenario, the CO may have one ranking for a permanent promotion and a different ranking for a temporary promotion depending on the rankings received.

Promotion Process

Every year in late fall, ICs are requested to submit promotion materials for those officers eligible for promotion. At this time CC Department Heads are requested to submit the following materials in support of promotion of COs in their department:

1. A 1-2 page memorandum recommending the officer for promotion. The memo should include an introduction that gives the CO's name, degree, serial number, and rank and grade to which recommended for promotion. The memo should give a summary of the organization, the officer's duties and accomplishments and the following criteria:
 - a. The Officer's **Impact on Mission** - Contributions of the officer in fulfilling the mission of NIH.
 - b. **Value Added** by the Officer - Quality of specific products and/or services rendered by the officer. Individual initiative and creativity in the officer's work for the NIH.
2. A current, dated Curriculum Vitae (CV) and bibliography, if appropriate. Officers should be encouraged to keep their CV and bibliography updated on a continuous basis.
3. A transmittal sheet.

Research Officer Group (ROG)

Along with the above stated documents, the following must also be submitted for ROG officers eligible for promotion:

- A maximum of five (5) of the most important papers published in the last three (3) years.
- A recommendation for promotion of ROG officers should be supported by the officer's research productivity and potential. A non-recommendation for promotion should be based on non-performance of duties.

This paperwork should be submitted to CC/OHRM by the requested deadline that is given well in advance.

Commissioned Officers eligible for promotion to the 0-5 grade and above must be reviewed by the appropriate internal Clinical Center promotion panel prior to the submission of materials to OHRM.

Non Recommendation of Officers for Promotion

Department Heads may feel that an officer eligible for promotion is currently not ready for a promotion based on his/her current training and experience. If this is the case, a Non-Recommendation for Promotion memo **should be** submitted. For sample, see Non-Recommend Memo. The memo should be specific to the officer under consideration for promotion and her/his performance.

Exceptional Capability (E/C) Promotions

When a CC Department Head believes that an officer is ready for a promotion in advance of the officer's normal eligibility period, the officer can be nominated for an Exceptional Capability (E/C) promotion if:

- The officer is not eligible in the current year for a promotion based on training and education.
- The officer has been on continuous active duty for at least one year.

Every year in late fall, ICs are requested to submit promotion materials for those officers who are felt to be deserving of an E/C promotion. At this time CC Department Heads are requested to submit the following materials in support of E/C promotion of officers in their department:

1. A memorandum which highlights the officer's specific accomplishments and acknowledges:
 - a) The officer's extraordinary level of professional training or work experience which has a particular benefit to PHS;
 - b) The superior ability exhibited by the officer in his/her present grade
 - c) A statement verifying that the officer's current billet has a rating at or above the grade of the recommended promotion.
2. An update curriculum vitae and bibliography.
3. A transmittal sheet.

Copies of COERs and billets do not need to be submitted with the recommendation memorandum because the E/C promotion board has access to this information. However it is good practice to notify the officer that he/she already has been nominated for an E/C promotion so that he/she has a chance to review their records for accuracy and completeness. If an officer is not on a current billet, a form PHS-1662 must be submitted to CC/OHRM to update the billet. The officer should also have a current COER on file at DCP.

The paperwork described above should be submitted to CC/OHRM by the requested deadline, which is given well in advance. The Director, CC will then rank all officers submitted for an E/C promotion. The resulting rank-order listing and all of the E/C promotion materials are then forwarded to SASE where they are prepared for the NIH Review. After the Agency review, the recommendations are sent to DCP for review and further rank-ordered by the E/C Promotion Board. The results from the DCP E/C Promotion Board are then reviewed and authorized by the Director, DCP.

For additional detailed guidance with promotion procedures, please refer to the CC Guidelines and Procedures: Promotion and Tenure Review manual.

Temporary 0-4 Promotions

Temporary 0-4 promotions for Medical Officers **are not** competitive and are administratively reviewed by the DCP.

Temporary 0-4 promotions do **not** undergo any paneling or ranking process.

As they are in the other occupational categories, Temporary 0-4 promotions for Medical Officers are contingent upon prior training and experience, many Medical Officers are eligible for promotion from Temporary 0-3 to Temporary 0-4 after serving the first six months of their initial tour of duty. Upon request, the following materials should be submitted to CC/OHRM:

- A copy of the officer's current valid license
- A copy of the officer's current COER
- A recommendation memorandum prepared by the officer's department, from the Director, CC to the Director DCP.

Once received by CC/OHRM the documents are forwarded to the Director, CC for approval and signature. The paperwork is then sent to SASE and DCP for review and if approved, processing. Temporary 0-4 grade Promotions in the other occupational categories are subject to the same Promotion Process previously discussed.

Alternative Workplace (Telecommuting or Teleworking) for COs

A CO may request approval to work at home or a Federal Telecommuting Center under the following three circumstances:

- When telecommuting will add to the officer's productivity or reduce the commuting distance for an officer. Department Heads may approve use of an alternative workplace under these circumstances for no more than 2 days a week. This authorization may be granted for a period of no more than 6 months.
- When it is in the interest of the program to have the officer complete a project away from the normal duty station. Department Heads may approve use of an alternative workplace under these circumstances for no more than 14 days for a particular project, and 30 days per calendar year for all such projects.
- When an officer's workspace is temporarily unavailable due to remodeling, damage, or repair, at Management's discretion, subject to approval by the Department Head.

In order to request use of an Alternative Workplace, the officer should submit a memo to the Department Head through the immediate supervisor that includes the following:

Commissioned Officers' Processing Guide

- Officer's name and PHS number,
- Full address of the alternative workplace,
- Duration of utilization of alternative workplace,
- Contact information for officer when away from duty station,
- Reason for the approval, and
- Specific items for the particular assignment.

Once the request has been approved a copy of the memo should be forwarded to Mr. Avery G. Jackson, CC/OHRM.

For additional information and sample memorandums refer to http://dcp.psc.gov/PDF_docs/23510.pdf.